

Infection Prevention and Control Cell

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

1.1 To respond to the public health threat of COVID-19 NHS England/Improvement set up an emergency response structure within the organisation, the National Incident Response Board (NIRB) being the key operational arm of this with different committees called 'cells' feeding in to it. One of these cells is the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) cell.

1.2 The IPC cell was established after the first Wuhan Novel Coronavirus incident management team (IMT) meeting on 23 January 2020 and has been operational seven days a week until 23 May 2020 when it stepped down to five days a week.

1.3 The IPC Cell function is to provide infection prevention and control advice, review/develop guidance for the NHS and NHS commissioned services. NHS England / NHS Improvement have been the lead organisation hosting, minuting and coordinating cell meetings.

1.4 The IPC cell membership includes representatives from the four nations, PHE and the ambulance service. They report into their own governance systems.

1.5 The IPC Cell is chaired on quarterly rotation by each of the four countries' IPC leads. Issues for escalation are raised at the daily IMT.

2. Outcomes

2.1. The group will be responsible for:

- reviewing international guidance and the published literature (national and international) to assess the learning and scientific evidence base to inform improvements in IPC practice, specifically the prevention of transmission and management of COVID-19 in NHS settings
- To support NHS England and UK providers and commissioned services with IPC advice and guidance as we progress through management of the pandemic.
- receiving recommendations/outputs from the Hospital Onset COVID-19 Infection (HOCl) Working Group including other SAGE subgroups and other expert groups e.g. New and Emerging Respiratory Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG), and consider for inclusion in operational guidance
- updating and revising IPC operational guidance ensuring alignment with the phase of the pandemic, including behavioural insights as required.
- providing a peer support network

- The IPC cell has the authority to develop guidance to inform policy makers CNO and CMO (England), CNO (Scotland), Welsh Government (Wales), and Department of Health (Northern Ireland).

3. Dependencies

3.1. The steering group will pursue its outcomes within the context of key dependencies including:

- Other COVID cells in NHSE/I
- The devolved administrations
- SAGE and its sub groups

4. Principles/ways of working

5.1 The main focus of the IPC cell as we move to restoration of services will be to continue to support and develop IPC guidance to the health care systems as required.

5.2 Monitoring and responding to areas for action that are made to the IPC Cell inbox (daily Mon-Fri) by the [REDACTED]. This should be reviewed in July and may cease, depending on demand.

5.3 Decision making in relation to IPC guidance will be based on evidence and specialist input. The health care systems will be consulted as necessary. Decisions made in the IPC cell will have a clear rationale and will be documented in the minutes. The chair has ultimate responsibility for the cell's decision making.

5.4 The IPC cell will keep a record of decisions made and changes to guidance with publication dates

5.5 The IPC cell will maintain a risk register which will be reviewed on a weekly basis and will form part of the update report to the [REDACTED].

5.6 The IPC cell will continue to engage with stakeholders and there will be a regular stakeholder communication sent from the IPC cell.

6 Membership

6.2 The four national IPC leads, will rotate the Chairmanship of the IPC cell on a quarterly basis

6.3 The IPC cell will consist of:

- Senior IPC representatives from NHS England/Improvement, Public Health England, the ambulance service, NHS Scotland, Department of Health and Social Care, Northern Ireland and NHS Wales.
- [REDACTED]

6.4 Co-opting colleagues from [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] as appropriate. To provide expert subject knowledge and share good practice as requested

6.5 The meeting will be quorate when it is attended by the Chair (or Deputy) and at least two other members

7 Secretariat

- 7.2 Secretariat will be provided by the [REDACTED] which will develop an agenda of items to be discussed and circulate supporting papers as necessary. Minutes/key actions will be circulated by the secretariat.

8 Frequency of Meetings

- 8.2 The IPC cell will meet weekly. Meetings will take place virtually.
- 8.3 Members may ask for ad hoc meetings as required.

9 Actions of Meetings

- 9.2 The secretariat shall note all actions from the proceedings and recommendations of all meetings, including recording the names of those in attendance.

10 Governance

- 10.2 The IPC cell reports into the four administrations' governance systems.
- 10.3 In England the cell will report into and give assurance to the CNO and the [REDACTED] that IPC guidance has been developed and required actions are being considered.